

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Final Office Action mailed on November 10, 2005, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 1, 3, 8, 15, 32-33, 36, 37, and 42 are amended, claims 5-7, and 35 are canceled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 1, 3-4, 8-18, 20-25, 27, 29, 32-34, and 36-42 are now pending in this application.

Claim Objections

Claims 3 and 5 are objected to because of the following informalities: The claims depend on claim 2 which has been cancelled. Appropriate correction is required.

Applicant has amended claim 3 such that it depends from independent claim 1 and Applicant has canceled claim 5. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to dependent claim 3.

§ 103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-6, 9-10, 12-13, 15-18, 20, 32, 37, 39-40, and 42 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,708) in view of Wen (U.S. Patent No. 6,428,157) and Inui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,264,305).

With regard to independent claim 1, as amended, Applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner (see below) has determined that dependent claims 7 and 8 are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and any intervening claims. Applicant has endeavored to incorporate the allowable subject matter from dependent claim 7 into independent claim 1.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of independent claim 1, as well as those claims that depend therefrom.

With regard to independent claims 15, 32, 37, and 42, as amended, Applicant has carefully examined independent claims 21 and 29, which were allowed by the Examiner (see below), and dependent claims 7 and 8, which were deemed allowable

(see below), and has endeavored to incorporate the allowable subject matter into independent claims 15, 32, 37, and 42.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 15, 32, 37, and 42, as amended, are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of independent claims 15, 32, 37, and 42, as well as those claims that depend therefrom.

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,708) in view of Wen (U.S. Patent No. 6,428,157) and Inui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,264,305), and further in view of Yasunori (JP 11277724 A). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as follows.

Claim 11 depends from independent claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1, as amended, is in condition for allowance. From Applicant's review of the Yasunori reference, the reference does not cure the deficiencies of the Kato, Wen, and Inui references. That is, the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Yasunori references do not teach or suggest, either individually or in combination:

[w]herein the ink ejection elements of each printhead are logically divided into at least four contiguous groups that contain the same number of ink ejection elements;
wherein a third and a fourth group of ink printhead ink ejection elements are always unused; and
wherein a first and a second group of fixer and overcoat printheads are always unused;

as recited in Applicant's independent claim 1, as amended.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that each and every element and limitation of independent claim 1, as amended, is not taught or suggested in the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Yasunori references, either individually or in combination. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of dependent claim 11.

Claims 14, 38, and 41 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,708) in view of Wen (U.S. Patent No. 6,428,157) and Inui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,264,305), and further in view of Moriyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,412,934). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as follows.

Claim 14 depends from independent claim 1 and claims 38 and 41 depend from independent claim 37. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 37, as amended, are in condition for allowance. From Applicant's review of the Moriyama reference, the reference does not cure the deficiencies of the Kato, Wen, and Inui references. That is, the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Moriyama references do not teach or suggest, either individually or in combination:

[w]herein the ink ejection elements of each printhead are logically divided into at least four contiguous groups that contain the same number of ink ejection elements;
wherein a third and a fourth group of ink printhead ink ejection elements are always unused; and
wherein a first and a second group of fixer and overcoat printheads are always unused;

as recited in Applicant's independent claim 1, as amended. Nor do the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Moriyama references teach or suggest, either individually or in combination:

wherein the ink ejection elements of each printhead are divided into groups that are logically divided into at least four contiguous groups that each contain the same number of ink ejection elements; and
wherein null swath data is generated for at least two groups of ink printhead ink ejection elements; and
wherein null swath data is generated for at least two groups of fixer and overcoat printhead ink ejection elements.

as recited in Applicant's independent claim 37, as amended.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that each and every element and limitation of independent claim 37, as amended, is not taught or suggested in the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Moriyama references, either individually or in combination. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of dependent claims 38 and 41.

Claims 33 and 35 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,708) in view of Wen (U.S. Patent No. 6,428,157), Inui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,264,305), and Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,102,537).

With regard to independent claim 33, as amended, Applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner (see below) has determined that dependent claim 36

is allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 33 and any intervening claims. Applicant has endeavored to incorporate the allowable subject matter from dependent claims 35 and 36 into independent claim 33. Applicant has canceled dependent claim 35.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 33, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of independent claim 33, as well as those claims that depend therefrom.

Claim 34 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,708) in view of Wen (U.S. Patent No. 6,428,157), Inui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,264,305), and Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,102,537), and further in view of Allen (U.S. Patent No. 5,635,969). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as follows.

Claim 34 depends from independent claim 33. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 33, as amended, is in condition for allowance. From Applicant's review of the Allen reference, the reference does not cure the deficiencies of the Kato, Wen, and Inui references. That is, the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Allen references do not teach or suggest, either individually or in combination:

wherein each printhead includes a number of ink ejection elements and wherein the ink ejection elements of each printhead are logically divided into at least four contiguous groups that each contain the same number of ink ejection elements; and
wherein null swath data is generated for at least two groups of ink printhead ink ejection elements; and
wherein null swath data is generated for at least two groups of fixer and overcoat printhead ink ejection elements.

as recited in Applicant's independent claim 33, as amended.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that each and every element and limitation of independent claim 33, as amended, is not taught or suggested in the Kato, Wen, Inui, and Allen references, either individually or in combination. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection of dependent claim 34.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 21-25, 27 and 29 are allowed and claims 7-8 and 36 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but were indicated to be allowable if

rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 21-25, 27, and 29. Using the allowed claims for instruction, Applicant has endeavored to incorporate the allowable subject matter from dependent claims 7-8 into independent claim 1 and the allowable subject matter from dependent claim 36 into independent claim 33.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 33, as amended, are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections of independent claims 1 and 33, as well as those claims that depend therefrom.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney Larry D. Baker at (360) 212-0769.

At any time during the pendency of this application, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to the Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR §1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: MS AF Commissioner for Patents, P.O. BOX 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 22nd day of December, 2005.

Alison L. Subendran
Name

[Signature]
Signature

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke E. Smith, et al.

By their Representatives,
BROOKS & CAMERON, PLLC
1221 Nicollet Avenue, Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN 55403

By: [Signature]
Jeffery L. Cameron
Reg. No. 43,527

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